COMPREHENSIVE SOLDIER FITNESS

STRONG MINDS ★ STRONG BODIES

Resilience Training

Lesson 2

Avoid Thinking Traps

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Avoid Thinking Traps

Avoid Thinking Traps:
Identify and correct counterproductive patterns in thinking through the use of Critical Questions.

ATC:
Identify your Thoughts about an Activating Event and the Consequences of those Thoughts.

Avoid Thinking Traps: B.L.U.F.

- Avoid Thinking Traps helps to build Mental Agility.
- Identify the Thinking Traps you tend to fall into so you can correct your thinking in the moment and avoid the traps in the future.

Thinking Traps

- Thinking Traps are overly rigid patterns in thinking that can cause us to miss critical information about a situation or individual.
- You can avoid Thinking Traps by identifying the pattern you fall into and asking Critical Questions to identify important information you missed

ATC Model and Thinking Traps

Activating Event
The trigger: a challenge, adversity, or positive event

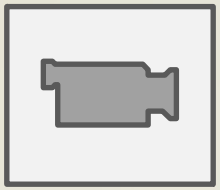
Thoughts
Your interpretations of the Activating Event; what you say to yourself

- **Jumping to Conclusions**
- **Mind Reading**
- **Me, Me, Me**
- **Them, Them, Them**
- **Always, Always, Always**
- **Everything, Everything, Everything**

Consequences: ER
E: Emotions
R: Reactions

Thinking Trap Example

- Which Thinking Traps did the judges fall into?



Common Thinking Traps

You send a long e-mail to a friend describing some challenges you are facing and asking for input, and you get a one sentence reply. You think to yourself, “She doesn’t care about my situation. She only cares about herself.”

Jumping to Conclusions:

Being certain about a situation despite having little or no evidence to support it

Action: Slow down.

Critical Question: What is the evidence for and against my thoughts?

Common Thinking Traps

You walk into your boss's office and he doesn't acknowledge you. You think, "He's mad at me."

Mind Reading:

Assuming that you know what another person is thinking, or expecting another person to know what you are thinking

Action: Speak up.
Critical Question: Did I express myself? Did I ask for information?

Common Thinking Traps

You agree to water your neighbor's plants while they're on leave, and all the plants die. You think to yourself, "It's all my fault. I must have done something wrong."

Me, Me, Me:
Believing that you are the sole cause of every problem you encounter

Action: Look outward.
Critical Question: How did others and/or circumstances contribute?

Common Thinking Traps

Your kids are out of control, and they won't listen to you. You think to yourself, "These monsters are incorrigible; the teachers must let them run wild at school !"

Them, Them, Them:

Believing that other people or circumstances are the cause of every problem you encounter

Action: Look inward.

Critical Question: How did I contribute?

Common Thinking Traps

You applied for a job, but just received a rejection notice. You think to yourself, "I have no marketable skills. I'll never find work."

Always, Always, Always:

Believing that negative events are unchangeable and that you have little or no control over them

Action: Grab control.

Critical Question: What's changeable? What can I control?

Common Thinking Traps

You say hi to your neighbor as she walks out of the house, but she doesn't acknowledge you. You think to yourself, "What a snob!"

Everything, Everything, Everything:

Believing that the cause of problems will negatively affect most areas of one's life; believing that you can judge one's worth, motivation, or ability on the basis of a single situation (character assassination)

Action: Look at behavior.

Critical Question: What is the specific behavior that explains the situation?

Common Thinking Traps

- Jumping to Conclusions
- Mind Reading
- Me, Me, Me
- Them, Them, Them
- Always, Always, Always
- Everything, Everything, Everything

This toxic style of thinking (always, everything) leads to poor performance in sports, worse relationships, worse health.

Me + Always + Everything = hopelessness and feeling bad about yourself

Them + Always + Everything = anger, victim mentality

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Avoid Thinking Traps: Key Principles

- **They're common:** It's common to fall into a Thinking Trap, particularly when stressed.
- **They narrow our field of vision:** Thinking Traps often lead to missing important information.
- **Notice patterns:** What Thinking Traps do you commonly fall into?
- **Use Critical Questions:** Be on the lookout for your common traps, and use the Critical Questions to help broaden your awareness of important information.
- **Mental Agility:** Avoiding Thinking Traps builds all of the competencies; Mental Agility is a primary target.

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Avoid Thinking Traps Practice

AE (who, what, when, where):

We're at home, getting ready to go out for "date night," and when it's about time to

Thoughts: What you said to yourself in the heat of the moment	**Consequences:** ER: Emotions, Reactions
He's mad because he thinks I'm taking too long. He's so impatient! I don't want to go out; the whole night is ruined.	Anger. Snap at him defensively. Anger. Physical tension builds. Disappointment. Stop talking.

- ❑ Jumping to Conclusions
- ❑ Mind Reading
- ❑ Me, Me, Me
- ❑ Them, Them, Them
- ❑ Always, Always, Always
- ❑ Everything, Everything, Everything

Use the appropriate Critical Ques issed because of the Thinking Trap. Record important new information on the handout

Debrief: Avoid Thinking Traps

- What did you learn from this?
- Which Thinking Traps do you tend to fall into?
- How do these Thinking Traps affect you?

Avoid Thinking Traps: Check on Learning

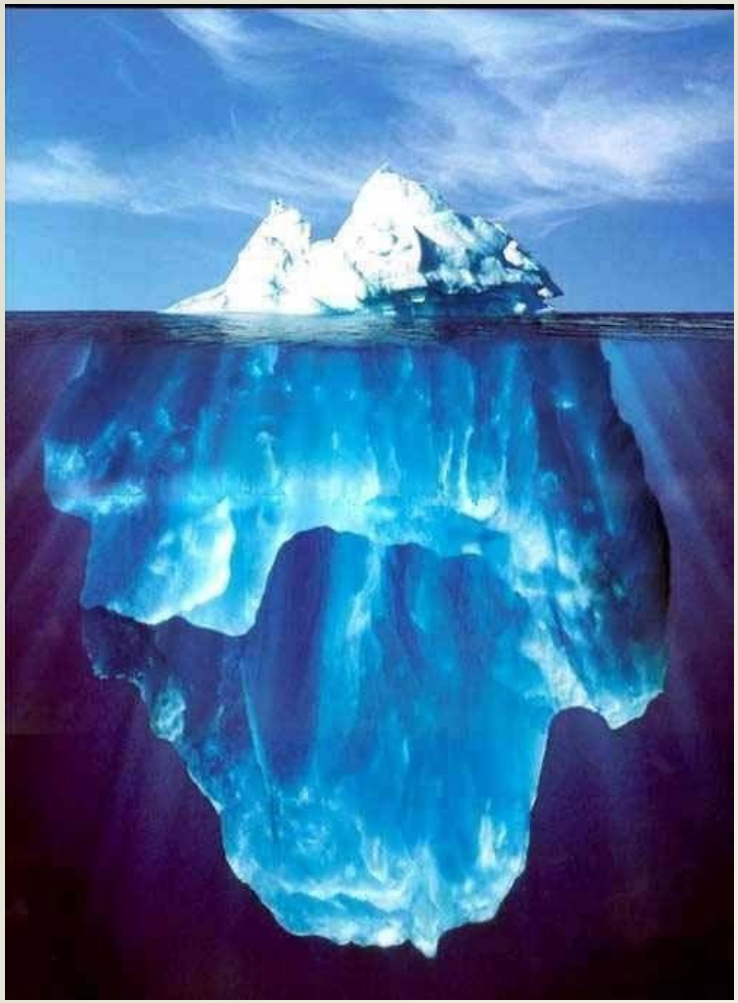
What is the skill?
Thinking Traps are common patterns in thinking that prevent a person from seeing a situation accurately. Avoiding Thinking Traps is a skill for identifying and correcting counterproductive thinking.

When do I use it?
Avoid Thinking Traps when your perspective on a situation is biased by such Thinking Traps.

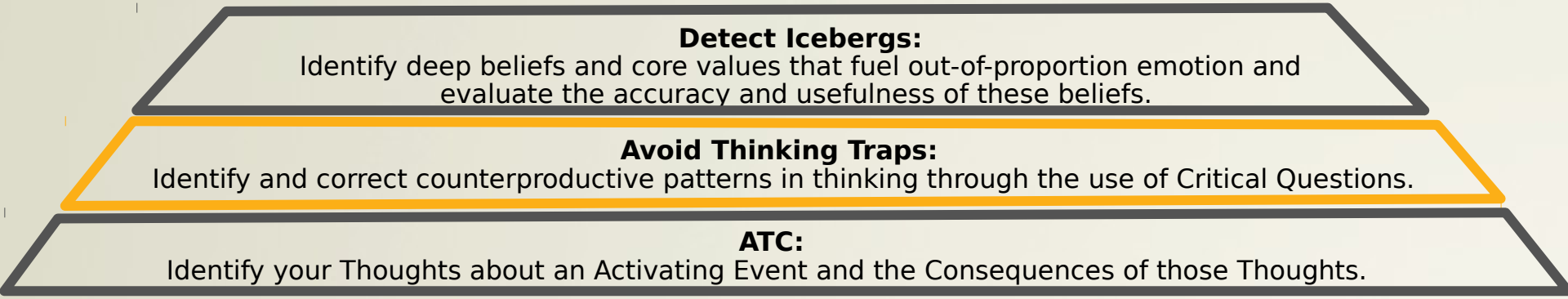
How do I use it?
Check for Thinking Traps and use the appropriate Critical Questions s to help you identify important information.

How can Avoiding Thinking Traps improve your response to life's stressors?

Detect Icebergs



Detect Icebergs



Detect Icebergs: B.L.U.F.

- Detecting Icebergs helps to build Self-awareness.
- Knowing that they've been activated gives us control over our Emotions and Reactions.
- Effective people stay in control and don't overreact under tough circumstances.

Indicators that Detect Icebergs Would Be Helpful

- Your emotions are out of proportion to what you're thinking in the heat of the moment.
- The intensity of your reaction surprises or confuses
- You notice strong Trap patte

Cut in Line Example

Surface Thoughts vs. Iceberg Beliefs

- **Surface Thoughts:** Are on the surface of our awareness–we can easily "tune in" to them
- **Iceberg Beliefs:** Are deeper rules for how the world "should" operate, assumptions about ourselves and others, core values

Deeply Held Beliefs or Core Values

Examples of Iceberg Beliefs

- I am strong.
- People can’t be trusted.
- The world is a dangerous place.
- People should be treated with dignity and respect.
- Asking for help is a sign of weakness.
- Going to a counselor means you’re a failure.

To Detect Icebergs

- Use “What” not “Why” questions.
- Ask the questions in any order.
- Repeat back the belief that came before.

- What is the most upsetting part of that for me?
- What does that mean to me?
- What is the worst part of that for me?
- Assuming that is true, what about that is so upsetting to me?

Once you've identified your Iceberg, ask yourself:

- Is this Iceberg helping or harming me in this situation?
- Is this Iceberg something I still believe/value?
- Is this Iceberg accurate in this situation?

A nice Restaurant.

Use your own story of detecting an iceberg.

AE (who, what, when, where):

Thoughts: What he said to himself in the heat of the moment	**Consequences:** ER: Emotions, Reactions

Ask yourself: Is my reaction helping or harming?

Detecting my iceberg

They should not be in here dressed like that.

What is the most upsetting part of that for me?

This is a nice place; they spoil the atmosphere.

What does that mean to me?

I'm not going to enjoy the experience as much.

Assuming that is true, what about that is so upsetting to me?

They're being totally inconsiderate of others

Detect Icebergs: Key Principles

- **An internal skill:** Use it to understand and control your own ER (Emotions, Reactions).
  - Allows you to prevent yourself from overreacting to something that is a personal hot-button issue (it isn't about the clothes)
- **Choose the depth:** It's your choice about how deep you go. Stop when it feels right to.
- **Thinking Traps vs. Icebergs:** Thinking Traps (TTs) are narrow; Icebergs are deep.

  Sometimes Icebergs drive our TTs.
- **What not Why:** "What" questions lead to depth; "Why" questions lead to defensiveness.
- **Self-awareness**: Detect Icebergs builds all of the resiliency competencies; Self-awareness is a primary target.

Detect Icebergs: Check on Learning

What is the skill?

Detect Icebergs is used to identify and evaluate deep beliefs or values that are driving our Emotions and Reactions.

When do I use it?

Use Detect Icebergs when your Reaction seems out of proportion and is undermining your performance or effectiveness.

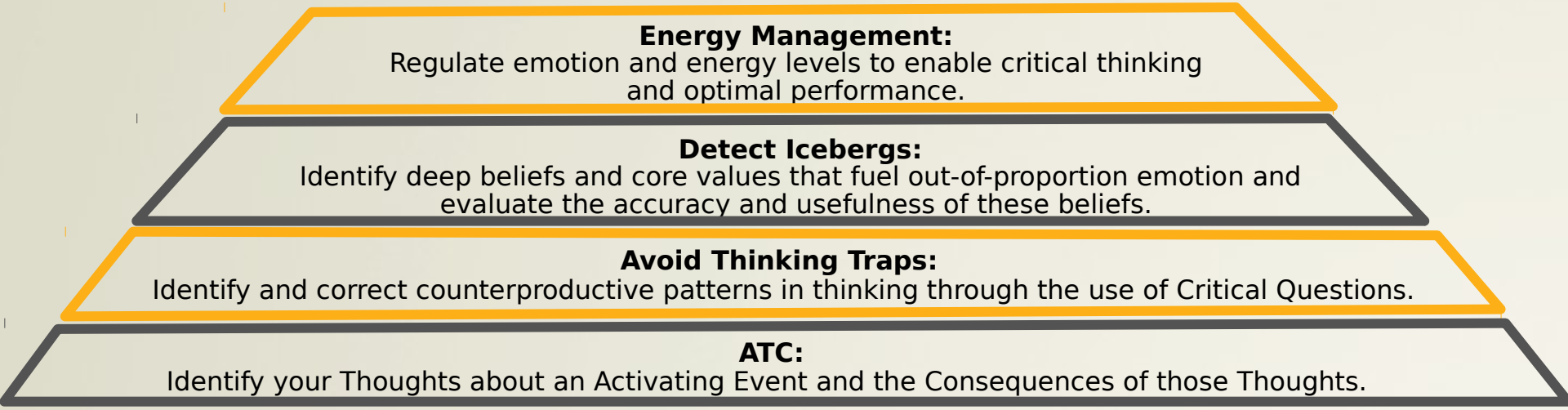
How do I use it?

Ask yourself the series of “What” questions to identify the Iceberg. Once the Iceberg is identified, ask yourself questions regarding the usefulness, accuracy, and flexibility of the belief.

How can your Icebergs impact your relationships?

Energy Management

Energy Management



Energy Management: B.L.U.F.

- Energy Management helps to build Self-regulation.
- These strategies lower the intensity of emotions so you can think and respond more clearly and with greater control.
- They have been used effectively in a variety of settings including sports, the workplace, and clinical settings with chronically ill patients.

How do you manage your energy and rejuvenate?

Energy Management Techniques

- Mental Games
- Controlled Breathing / Mindful Breathing
- Meditation
- Positive Imagery
- Progressive Muscle Relaxation

Mental Games

- Purpose is to remain calm, and disengage when appropriate; take a step back and regroup.
- Principles for designing mental games:
  - Must require your full attention
  - Should be hard and fun
  - Must be games you can do within a few minutes

Mental Games

- **Math games:** Count back from 1,000 by 7s.
- **Alphabet games:** Work your way through the alphabet, naming someone for each pair of initials.
- **Categories games:** Name all the sports figures, war heroes, capitols, etc. you can in two minutes.
- **Army alphabet:** Repeat it backwards.

Mindful Breathing

- Practice deep breathing
  - Take a normal breath, hold, and count to 5
  - Breathe out and focus on relaxation
  - Breathe in and out slowly in 10-second cycles

    (or whatever is comfortable for you)
- Focus attention
  - Keep bringing attention back to breathing
  - Practice builds attention capacity

Meditation

- Can be secular or religious/spiritual
- Two broad categories of meditation
  - *Concentrative* seeks to restrict awareness by focusing the attention on a single object, like the breath, a mantra, or a word
  - *Mindfulness* attempts to attend non-judgmentally to all internal or external stimuli without ruminating on any one in particular.
  - Some practices combine elements of

Progressive Muscle Relaxation

- Do controlled breathing for two minutes.
- As you breathe in, make fists and tense your hands and lower arms.
- Keep your muscles tight for the count of fifteen.
- As you exhale, relax the muscles quickly and concentrate on the feeling of relaxation.
- Do twice, take a minute break and then move on to the next muscle group.
- For each group tense the muscles for fifteen seconds, then relax them for thirty seconds.
- After each muscle group, take a minute break before continuing to the next muscle group.

Energy Management: Key Principles

- **Practice:** These techniques require practice in order to derive full benefit.
- **Double Up:** Energy Management can be used in conjunction with other skills in the program.
- **Self-regulation:** Energy Management builds all of the competencies; Self-regulation is a primary target.

Energy Management: Check on Learning

What is the skill?

Energy Management strategies are used to regulate emotion and energy levels to enable critical thinking and optimal performance.

When do I use it?

Use Energy Management strategies whenever you want to regulate the intensity of your emotions and energy so that you can effectively cope with a situation and enhance your performance.

How do I use it?

Use Progressive Muscle Relaxation or Mindful Breathing to relax. Use the mental games to refocus your thinking on the task at hand.

When might Energy Management help you the most?

VIA Survey of Character Strengths

- Take the VIA Survey of Character Strengths
- Print out results for all 24 Character Strengths
- Bring to next Resilience Training Lesson
- www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/Default.aspx

:: Authentic Happiness :: Using the new Positive Psychology - Windows Internet Explorer
http://www.authentichappiness.sas.upenn.edu/Default.aspx
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Tools
research has demonstrated that it is possible to be happier — to feel more satisfied, to be more engaged with life, find more meaning, have higher hopes, and probably even laugh and smile more, regardless of one's circumstances. Positive psychology interventions can also lastingly decrease depression symptoms. The research underlying these rigorously tested interventions is presented in the July/August edition of the American Psychologist, the journal of the American Psychology Association.
Authentic Happiness has almost 700,000 registered users around the world. You are welcome to use all of the resources on this website for free.
University of Pennsylvania now offers the first Master of Applied Positive Psychology Program in the world.
A new program at the University of Pennsylvania provides an important opportunity for psychologists, educators, life coaches, and health and business professionals interested in the application of the science of Positive Psychology. The Master of Applied Positive Psychology (MAPP) offers professionals, many of whom are working full-time, the chance to earn a pioneering graduate degree from an Ivy League university. Click here to learn more.
Landmark Article Reporting the Efficacy of Positive Psychology Interventions
Martin E.P. Seligman, Tracy A. Steen, Nansook Park and Christoper Peterson review recent developments in the field of Positive Psychology in the July-August issue of American Psychologist, the journal of the American Psychology Association. They
APA
American Psychologist
July–August 2005
Positive Psychology Progress:
Empirical Validation
Featured Questionnaire:
COMPASSIONATE LOVE SCALE
Measures your tendency to support, help, and understand other people
Emotion Questionnaires:
AUTHENTIC HAPPINESS INVENTORY QUESTIONNAIRE
Measures Overall Happiness
CES-D QUESTIONNAIRE
Measures Depression Symptoms
FORDYCE EMOTIONS QUESTIONNAIRE
Measures Current Happiness
GENERAL HAPPINESS QUESTIONNAIRE
Assesses Enduring Happiness
PANAS QUESTIONNAIRE
Measures Positive and Negative Affect
Engagement Questionnaires:
BRIEF STRENGTHS TEST
Measures 24 Character Strengths
GRATITUDE QUESTIONNAIRE
Measures Appreciation about the Past
GRIT SURVEY
Measures the Character Strength of Perseverence
OPTIMISM TEST
Measures Optimism About the Future
TRANSGRESSION MOTIVATIONS QUESTIONNAIRE
Measures Forgiveness
VIA SURVEY OF CHARACTER STRENGTHS
Measures 24 Character Strengths
VIA STRENGTH SURVEY FOR CHILDREN
Measures 24 Character Strengths for Children
WORK-LIFE QUESTIONNAIRE
Measures Work-Life Satisfaction
Meaning Questionnaires:
Participants
learn how you can help
Meet Dr. Seligman
Dr. Seligman's main mission has been the promotion of the field of Positive Psychology. This discipline includes the study of positive emotion, positive character traits, and positive institutions. Dr. Seligman is now turning his attention to training Positive Psychologists, individuals whose practice will make the world a happier place, parallel to the way clinical psychologists have made the world a less unhappy place. Read full bio ...
Dr Seligman's Presentations
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International Positive Psychology Association
Find Out More
Resources & Links
Additional resources can be found at other Positive Psychology websites:
BBC News: The Happiness Formula
American Psychological Association (APA)
European Network for
Positive Psy
National Institute of Mental Health (NIMH)
Positive Organizational Scholarship at the University of Michigan School of Business
Positive Psychology Center: Research Information
Quality of Life Research Center
VIA Institute on Character
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